1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally
177 therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 The Allapalli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills
466 attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the
166 Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

[1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate
622 curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the
791 *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV2148.
[5] Pp. 180-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4035.